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At the invitation of Columbus, the cacique, though still apparently in pain from his wound,* accompanied him to the ships that very evening. He had wondered at the power and grandeur of the white men when they first visited his shores with two small

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Columbus took the cacique through the ship. The various works of art; the plants and fruits of the Old World; domestic fowls of different kinds, cattle, sheep, swine, and other animals, brought to stock the island, all were wonders to him; but what most struck him with amazement, was the horses. He had never seen any but the most diminutive quadrupeds, and was astonished at their size, their great strength, terrific appearance, yet perfect docility.† He looked upon all these extraordinary objects as so many wonders brought from heaven, which he still believed to be the native home of the white men.

On board of the ship were ten of the women delivered from Carib captivity. They were chiefly natives of the island of Boriquen, or Porto Rico. These soon attracted the notice of the cacique, who is represented to have been of an amorous complexion. He entered into conversation with them; for though the islanders spoke different languages, or, rather, as is more probable, different dialects of the same language, they were able, in general, to understand each other. Among these women was

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CHAPTER X.

EXCURSION OF JUAN DE LUXAN AMONG THE MOUNTAINS.—CUSTOMS AND CHARACTERISTICS OF THE NATIVES.—COLUMBUS RETURNS TO ISABELLA.

[1494.]

WHILE the admiral remained among the mountains, superintending the building of the fortress, he dispatched a young cavalier of Madrid, named Juan de Luxan, with a small band of armed men, to range about the country, and explore the whole of the province, which, from the reports of the Indians, appeared to be equal in extent to the kingdom of Portugal. Luxan returned, after a few days' absence, with the most satisfactory accounts. He had traversed a great part of Cibao, which he found more capable of cultivation than had at first been imagined. It was generally mountainous, and the soil covered with large round pebbles of a blue color, yet there was good pasturage in many of the valleys. The mountains, also, being watered by frequent showers, produced grass of surprisingly quick and luxuriant growth, often reaching to the saddles of the horses. The forests seemed to Luxan to be full of valuable spices; he being deceived by the odors emitted by those aromatic plants and herbs which abound in the woodlands of the tropics. There were great vines also, climb-

pression made upon the minds of the common people by the death of these cavaliers, which operated materially to increase the unpopularity of Columbus; as it was mischievously represented, that they had been seduced from their homes by his delusive promises, and sacrificed to his private interests.

countries they had visited and subjugated, and, above all, their having made descents on the islands of the Caribs, routed their formidable inhabitants, and carried several of them into captivity. To these accounts the cacique and his followers remained listening in profound attention until the night was advanced.

The next morning the ships were under way and standing along the coast with a light wind and easy sail, when they beheld three canoes issuing from among the islands of the bay. They approached in regular order; one, which was very large and handsomely carved and painted, was in the centre, a little in advance of the two others, which appeared to attend and guard it. In this was seated the cacique and his family, consisting of his wife, two daughters, two sons, and five brothers. One of the daughters was eighteen years of age, beautiful in form and countenance; her sister was somewhat younger; both were naked, according to the custom of these islands, but were of modest demeanor. In the prow of the canoe stood the standard-bearer of the cacique, clad in a mantle of variegated feathers, with a tuft of gay plumes on his head, and bearing in his hand a fluttering white banner. Two Indians with caps or helmets of feathers of uniform shape and color, and their faces painted in a similar manner, beat upon tabors; two others, with hats curiously wrought of green feathers, held trumpets of a fine black wood, ingeniously carved; there were six others, in large hats of white feathers, who appeared to be guards to the cacique.

Having arrived along side of the admiral's ship, the cacique entered on board with all his train. He appeared in full regalia. Around his head was a band of small stones of various colors, but principally green, symmetrically arranged, with large white stones at intervals, and connected in front by a large jewel of